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4 June 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Draft SNIE 53-63  
(3 June 1968 Version)

1. On the whole, this is a very good paper which would be useful and enlightening to our masters if forwarded unchanged in its present form. I do, however, feel it could be improved in some measure, if it is not past the stage where any tinkering simply opens pandora's box at the USID table.
2. My main problem is that neither the text nor, particularly, the conclusions bring into sharp focus the point that all current Communist military and political activity, including attacks in South Vietnam and DRV behavior at Paris, is directed against three targets: (1) The GVN as a functioning set of politico-military institutions; (2) The attitude of the South Vietnamese people toward the GVN and their confidence in its ability to provide minimal protection and services; and (3) The will and attitude of the US Government. Our adversaries' main immediate objective is to develop a mix of military, political, and psychological pressures sufficient to cause the GVN to start unravelling. These thoughts are implicit in the paper, but I personally think they need to be explicitly stated in a "tie-together" paragraph following paragraph II of the present text and a matching sentence in paragraph A or B of the conclusions.
3. A secondary problem is that I think the paper mis-states the nature of what the enemy intends to try in the Saigon area. The events of recent days plus data recently acquired from prisoners and documents strongly suggest that the enemy is not planning some future "heavy assault" but, instead, intends to keep feeding forces in piecemeal for a sustained attempt at investiture that has already begun and that the enemy will try to keep rolling for the next three to four months.

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4. I have made some marginal notes or inter-linear notes at places where I believe the specific language of the present draft could be improved on this and other points.

5. Finally, I have the personal problem of privately believing that the issue will be decided politically, one way or the other, between now and December and hence disliking the estimate's implicit projection that events will probably carry on over the ensuing months about as they are running now. My view is not the majority view in this Agency, however, and hence it would be inappropriate for me to suggest that the SNIE be altered to reflect it.

George A. Carver, Jr.  
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment

cc: Admiral Taylor  
Mr. R. J. Smith  
Mr. Abbot Smith

DCI/SAVA/GACarver:jes

✓1 - GAC/Chrono

1 - VAS/Chrono

1 - ONE Memoranda(attach to SNIE 53-68, 3 Jun 68)

1 - Memo for DCI File

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